

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2989

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORC, HA, SHUM, PINT
SUBJ: MEETING WITH HAITIAN UN PERM REP: HUMAN RIGHTS

1. SUMMARY. HAITIAN UN PERM REP CHARLES TOLD MISOFFS THAT PRESIDENT DUVALIER WAS "MUCH IMPRESSED" BY AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND CONSIDERS HIS VISIT HELPFUL. CHARLES NOTED ALLEGED DANGERS OF "DISTORTION" OF VISIT BY EXILES AND "POLITICIANS" IN HAITI. HE SAID THAT ANY NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY BE MUCH WORSE THAN THE PRESENT ONE, AND THAT HAITIAN GOVERNMENT IS EAGER TO GET HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS BEHIND IT SO IT CAN GET ON WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE SUGGESTED THAT WITH US COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING HAITI WILL LOOK VERY DIFFERENTLY IN TWO YEARS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT HIS REQUEST, MISOFFS MET WITH HAITIAN PERM REP SERGE CHARLES ON SEPTEMBER 8TH ON EVE OF CHARLES'S RETURN TO HAITI AT THE REQUEST OF PRESIDENT DUVALIER FOR CONSULTATIONS. CHARLES DID NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHEN HE WOULD RETURN BUT EXPECTS TO BE BACK BY BEGINNING OF UNGA.

3. CHARLES SAID THAT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE ARRIVAL OF TIME CORRESPONDENT DIEDRICH, AMBASSADOR
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YOUNG'S VISIT WAS VERY HELPFUL. CHARLES NOTED THAT THE DIEDRICH PROBLEM WAS RESOLVED AMICABLY.

4. CHARLES SAID "SOME POLITICIANS" IN HAITI ARE "DISTORTING THE FACTS" ABOUT THE VISIT, SAYING IT GAVE A "GREEN LIGHT" FOR "LIBERATION." BUT HE SAID THAT THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS TODAY TO REPORT SUCH REMARKS IS MUCH GREATER THAN IN

PREVIOUS YEARS AND THAT THE PRESS NOW SERVES AS A KIND OF "WATCH DOG" ON THE GOVERNMENT AND AVOIDS THE PROBLEM OF HEARING ONLY SUPPORTIVE OPINIONS. HE NOTED THAT THERE WOULD BE RALLIES IN VARIOUS US CITIES ON THE OCCASION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE DUVALIER RULE BUT PROFESSED NOT TO BE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR EFFECT ON THE DUVALIER GOVERNMENT. HE DWELT AT SOME LENGTH ON THE INADVISABILITY OF HAVING ANY HOPE THAT HAITIAN EXILES COULD FURNISH BETTER LEADERSHIP FOR HAITI, INCLUDING SAYING THAT SINCE THEY WERE ALL POOR, THE FIRST THING THEY WOULD HAVE TO DO WOULD BE TO ENRICH THEMSELVES IF THEY GOT INTO POWER.

5. CHARLES COMPLAINED ABOUT THE TONE OF THE ARTICLES ABOUT AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S VISIT TO HAITI THAT APPEARED IN THE WASHINGTON POST AND THE NEW YORK TIMES WHICH MADE IT LOOK AS IF AMBASSADOR YOUNG "GAVE ORDERS".

6. HE ALSO INSISTED THAT ANY CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT BROUGHT ABOUT BY OUTSIDE PRESSURE COULD NOT BE DONE DEMOCRATICALLY, NOR WOULD IT PRODUCE A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF THE "UNPREPAREDNESS" OF THE HAITIAN PEOPLE AND THE VENALITY OF THE EXILE OPPOSITION. HE NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD BE WORSE THAN THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP. HE REITERATED THE GOH'S COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. FOR HIMSELF, CHARLES SAID HE FAVORED A MORE LIBERAL HAITI AND
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HAD RECOMMENDED TO PRESIDENT DUVALIER THAT LOCAL ELECTIONS ON THE "COMMUNE" (COUNTY) LEVEL BE PLANNED FOR SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE AS A STEP TOWARDS PREPARING THE PEOPLE FOR DEMOCRACY. HE COMMENTED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF FURTHER LIBERALIZATION MEASURES TO MARK THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DUVALIER GOVERNMENT.

7. CHARLES PREDICTED THAT "AS SOON AS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF HAITI IMPROVES, THERE WOULD ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY BE A SERIOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY. A LOT HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE, HE SAID, TO LIBERALIZE THE COUNTRY, AND HE AGAIN MENTIONED THE NEW FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. HE INSISTED THAT THE MAJOR AREA OF CONCERN MUST BE THE RURAL AREAS, WHERE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF HAITIANS LIVE IN GREAT POVERTY. "IF WE CAN HAVE TWO YEARS WITH YOUR COOPERATION, THE PICTURE WILL BE QUITE DIFFERENT." TO HAVE THOSE TWO YEARS, HE SAID THAT THE GOH WANTED TO "PUT THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BEHIND IT AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE" SO IT CAN CONCENTRATE ON THE ECONOMIC TASK IN THE RURAL AREAS.

8. CHARLES SAID THAT SOME OF THE PERSONS AROUND PRESIDENT

DUVALIER ARE WORKING FOR CHANGE AND THAT IT IS POSSIBLE
TO INFLUENCE THE CONSERVATIVES WHO ARE HOLDOVERS FROM
FRANCOIS DUVALIER'S TIME. CHARLES SAID HE WOULD KEEP BEFORE
THE PRESIDENT'S ATTENTION THE NEED FOR MORE LIBERALIZATION
IN HIS TRIP HOME IN SEPTEMBER.
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